

One Year Later: While GOP Attempts to Roll Back Patient Protections, Americans Are Benefiting from the Affordable Care Act

One year ago today, Republicans passed a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act and roll back the new freedoms for all Americans that the health care reform law provides. Since then, Republicans have voted fourteen times to repeal patient protections and put insurance companies back in control of health care, and have not put forward a new plan of their own to rein in costs and protect patients – despite their own promises to do so in their Pledge to America and a resolution instructing committees to report legislation replacing the Affordable Care Act .

Over the past year, the Affordable Care Act is making a real difference. Everyone from children to young adults to seniors are experiencing new health care freedoms:

- Children under the age of 19 with pre-existing conditions and pregnant women are freed from discrimination by insurers.
- Young adults have the freedom to stay on their parents' insurance plan until the age of 26.
- Families are free from worry about unreasonable premium increases, lifetime limits, and losing their insurance when a family member gets sick. They are also benefitting from consumer protections that ensure 80-85% of premium dollars are spent on improving their health care.
- Seniors have more freedom to get the prescription drugs and preventative care they need.

In 2011, health care reform provided lower costs and better health care coverage for millions of Americans. Here's a look at the numbers:

- **More than 40,000:** Americans with pre-existing medical conditions gained affordable coverage through the federally administered Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan and are protected from discrimination by insurers.
- **2.5 million:** Young adults gained insurance thanks to a provision allowing them to remain on their parents' health insurance until age 26.
- **More than 2.65 million:** Americans with Medicare received a 50 percent discount on their prescription drugs, **saving seniors and people with disabilities \$1.5 billion** on prescriptions, thanks to a provision that addresses the Medicare prescription drug "donut hole."
- **More than 22.6 million:** Seniors and people with disabilities accessed no-cost-sharing preventive services thanks to a provision that provides important preventative care measures and free annual checkups.
- **50 million:** Americans living in medically underserved areas now have more accessible health care thanks to 350 new community health centers across the country.
- **10 percent:** Hikes in Americans' health care premiums that are over ten percent are now subject to review thanks to a provision that protects consumers from unreasonable insurance rate increases.
- **50 percent:** Increase in the number of children who have more accessible health care thanks to more than \$14 million awarded to school-based health centers across the country, which provide primary care, dental health, mental health, substance-abuse counseling, and health and nutrition counseling.
- **80 percent:** The minimum amount of each premium dollar insurance companies must spend on health care benefits thanks to a consumer provision that requires insurance companies to spend premium dollars on improving your care instead of overhead, executive salaries or marketing.
- **28:** States have already taken steps to set up new, transparent, consumer-friendly health care marketplaces that will allow all Americans to comparison shop for affordable, high-quality health care starting in 2014.
- **Nearly \$3 million:** Recovered in health care fraud thanks to a provision that gives the Department of Justice new tools to fight fraud.

Unfortunately, Republicans have spent the last year trying to roll back health care reform provisions that rein in costs and protect patients – even though repeal has no chance of becoming law and is a waste of valuable time that could be spent trying to get more Americans back to work. Democrats are committed to protecting these new health care freedoms and ensuring middle class families and seniors – not insurance companies – are in control of their health care. We hope in the coming year, Republicans will abandon these political show votes, and work with us to address the serious challenges confronting our nation.